

REMARKS

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1 to 6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. The Examiner has stated that the statement "and/or plastic rib supports attached thereto" in claims 1 and 5 is unclear. While Applicant is respectfully having some difficulty understanding which portion of the statement the Examiner finds unclear, nevertheless and to further prosecution claims 1 and 5 have been amended to indicate more clearly that the plastic rib supports are attached to the metal surface. Plastic rib supports are described in the application on page 5, lines 25-29 and are shown in figures 2 and 3 by reference number 5.

The Examiner has stated that the statement "and/or wherein at least one rib support is connected to said metal surface with a lip" in claims 1 and 5 is unclear. Again, Applicant is respectfully having some difficulty understanding which portion of this statement is deemed to be unclear, but Applicant wishes to point out that plastic rib supports that connect with a lip are described in the application on page 5, lines 25-29 and are indicated in figures 2 and 3 by reference numbers 5 for the rib supports and 6 for the lips.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1 to 6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Girardot et al. (U.S. patent 5,658,041). Girardot et al. disclose a motor vehicle front body panel that includes at least one rigid cross-member that extends between two support pieces. The support pieces may be of plastic and may be molded around the ends of the cross-member, which may be metal [see abstract]. The Examiner states that "Girardot et al. '041 discloses an integral structure comprising a metal surface (1 and 17) and one or more plastic support members (2); wherein said metal surface comprises at least one edge portion formed at least in part with a bend sufficient to secure at least one support member therealong."

The claims of the present invention have been amended to require that when the metal surface comprises at least one edge portion, the edge portion is formed with an undulating or serrated pattern. This serves to provide the advantage of "promot[ing] better contact and a more secured fit of the molded plastic to the

edge" [page 4, lines 26-28 of the present application]. Girardot et al. do not disclose the use of metal surfaces containing undulating or serrated patterns.

Support for added claim 7 can be found on page 4, line 22 to page 5, line 5 and in figure 1 of the present application.

In view of the foregoing, allowance of the above-referenced application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



WILLIAM H. HAMBY
ATTORNEY FOR APPLICANT
Registration No.: 31,521
Telephone: (302) 992-3230
Facsimile: (302) 992-3257

Dated: 7-23-04